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Study: Best Cities to Live in Oklahoma

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Whether you're exploring uncharted territory or you're a native Oklahoman who's relocating, deciding where to stake your claim is the first step. Before you make a move, take a look at the CreditDonkey team's list of the best places to live in Oklahoma.

Everyone knows that Oklahoma is where the wind comes sweepin' down the plain, but there's more to see than just tumbling tumbleweeds. From the rolling prairies of the Red River Valley to the fertile grasslands of the High Plains region, the landscape is as diverse as it is appealing. The vastness of Oklahoma's windswept beauty is matched only by the strength and resilience of its people.

Shaped by Native American culture and Western history, the Sooner State continues to honor the pioneering spirit that brought the first homesteaders to the area more than a century ago. As a leader in natural gas and oil production, Oklahoma boasts one of the strongest and most rapidly growing economies in the U.S. The unemployment rate is consistently below the national average and home prices are among the lowest in the nation.

10 Best Cities to Live in Oklahoma



STUDY METHODOLOGY

Our rankings are based on these five factors:

1. Crime Rate
2. Commute Time
3. Income
4. Education
5. Restaurants Per Capita

Wherever you decide to settle down, you want to feel safe when you're at home, work or out on the town. To pinpoint Oklahoma's safest cities, we ranked each location based on the odds of being the victim of a violent crime.

Relocating for a new job opportunity may prove to be a headache if it extends your daily drive. We know that no one likes to be stuck in traffic, so we based our rankings in part on the average commute time for each city.

As its economy continues to expand, so does the earning potential for Oklahoma's residents. This is especially true for those who've completed a college degree. We considered how each city ranked based on both the median household income as well as the percentage of residents who hold a bachelor's degree or higher.

Oklahoma's state meal is a belly-busting smorgasbord of down-home favorites, including fried okra, squash, barbecue pork, chicken fried state, grits, corn, strawberries and, of course, pecan pie. While these staples remain a part of the state's culinary tradition, you'll find there's plenty of room for innovation. To guide you toward those cities with the most eclectic dining choices, we considered the number of restaurants per capita for each spot on our list.

10. PONCA CITY

- Odds of Being a Victim of a Violent Crime: 1 in 218.3
- Commute Time: 14.9 minutes
- Income: \$40,434
- Residents With a Bachelor's Degree or Higher: 20.4%
- Restaurants: 1 per 431 inhabitants

Part of Oklahoma's north central region, Ponca City got its start in 1893 when the land run brought settlers to the area hoping to put down roots. Oil was discovered here in 1911 and ConocoPhillips continues to be one of Ponca City's biggest employers. Kaw Lake, Lake Ponka and the Arkansas River offer plenty of opportunities for outdoor recreation but when the stars come out, you can try your luck at the Osage Casino.

Did You Know: Ponca City's Pioneer Woman Museum features a 30-foot tall bronze statue which captures the spirit of Oklahoma's past, present and future female innovators.

9. LAWTON

- Odds of Being a Victim of a Violent Crime: 1 in 107.4
- Commute Time: 14.5 minutes
- Income: \$43,953
- Residents With a Bachelor's Degree or Higher: 19.7%
- Restaurants: 1 per 604 inhabitants

One of Oklahoma's larger cities, Lawton is tucked away in the southwest corner of the state, close to the Texas border. Manufacturing and healthcare are big business, with companies like Goodyear, Boeing and Lockheed Martin attracting a number of job seekers. Despite having nearly 100,000 residents, Lawton features the shortest average commute of any city in our rankings, clocking in at 14.5 minutes. The city has an active nightlife scene that includes a number of bars, restaurants and casinos, but you'll also find family-friendly attractions like LOL and the Wichita Mountains Wildlife Refuge.

Did You Know: Lawton was established as part of a lottery drawing, with homesteaders selected at random to receive plots of land.

8. MOORE

- Odds of Being a Victim of a Violent Crime: 1 in 735.9
- Commute Time: 21.6 minutes
- Income: \$56,892
- Residents With a Bachelor's Degree or Higher: 22.3%
- Restaurants: 1 per 741 inhabitants

Less than 10 miles from Oklahoma City, Moore is ideally situated for professionals who work in the metro area. Families are also drawn to the city because of its moderately priced homes and significantly lower cost of living. A better than average violent crime rate and a median income of nearly \$57,000 all contribute to Moore's status as an excellent place to call home. Local restaurants offer everything from barbecue to German, but the most famous chicken salad sandwich in town is served at Two Olives Cafe.

Did You Know: Moore's Yellow Rose Dinner Theatre is the state's only full-time professional dinner theater venue.

7. ENID

- Odds of Being a Victim of a Violent Crime: 1 in 303.4
- Commute Time: 14.7 minutes
- Income: \$41,515
- Residents With a Bachelor's Degree or Higher: 20.9%
- Restaurants: 1 per 514 inhabitants

Affordable housing and a thriving economy are just two reasons why Enid has become one of Oklahoma's most up-and-coming cities. Vance Air Force Base is the area's largest employer but the petroleum industry also accounts for a substantial number of jobs. Enid's residents take pride in the city's cultural and historical heritage, although you may have trouble getting them to agree on how the city got its name.

Did You Know: Legendary evangelist Oral Roberts began his ministry in Enid in 1947.

6. NORMAN

- Odds of Being a Victim of a Violent Crime: 1 in 658.8
- Commute Time: 20.9 minutes
- Income: \$48,248
- Residents With a Bachelor's Degree or Higher: 43.4%
- Restaurants: 1 per 462 inhabitants

Located 20 miles south of Oklahoma City, Norman is the home to the University of Oklahoma, which enrolls roughly 30,000 students each year. The education sector supplies a significant number of jobs, followed by the manufacturing, healthcare and tech industries. Despite being part of Oklahoma's Tornado Alley, residents continue to flock to Norman in pursuit of safer neighborhoods and higher wages.

Did You Know: Nicknamed the "City of Festivals," some of Norman's annual events include the Chocolate Festival, the National Weather Festival and the Midsummer Nights' Fair arts festival.

5. YUKON

- Odds of Being a Victim of a Violent Crime: 1 in 716.2
- Commute Time: 20.9 minutes
- Income: \$61,766
- Residents With a Bachelor's Degree or Higher: 28%
- Restaurants: 1 per 492 inhabitants

Yukon has a reputation for being one of central Oklahoma's most family-friendly communities, thanks to its top-rated schools and a violent crime rate that's considerably better than the national average. Located less than 20 miles west of Oklahoma City, it's also a preferred destination for professionals who work in the greater metro area. Yukon offers a variety of attractions to keep you busy, including the Express Clydesdales Ranch and the annual Czech Festival.

Did You Know: The neon "Yukon's Best Flour" sign that adorns the old flour mill on Route 66 is one of the city's most beloved landmarks.

4. BROKEN ARROW

- Odds of Being a Victim of a Violent Crime: 1 in 649.6
- Commute Time: 20.3 minutes
- Income: \$64,411
- Residents With a Bachelor's Degree or Higher: 31.3%
- Restaurants: 1 per 718 inhabitants

Broken Arrow is Tulsa's largest suburb and the fourth largest city in Oklahoma. Founded as an agricultural center, it has since evolved into a major commercial and manufacturing hub. Broken Arrow is one of the state's fastest-growing cities, in terms of population and economic development. Both the violent crime rate and median incomes are much better than neighboring Tulsa, solidifying its reputation as one of the area's most desirable suburban communities.

Did You Know: Broken Arrow's annual Rooster Days Festival is the longest continuous running festival in the state.

3. OWASSO

- Odds of Being a Victim of a Violent Crime: 1 in 536.4
- Commute Time: 20.5 minutes
- Income: \$66,074
- Residents With a Bachelor's Degree or Higher: 29.6%
- Restaurants: 1 per 419 inhabitants

To the north of Tulsa lies Owasso, one of the metro area's smaller suburbs. What began as a small railroad town has transformed into a bustling bedroom community of more than 31,000 residents. The local school system is one of the city's top employers, and median incomes edge slightly higher, at \$66,000 annually. When it comes to good eats, Harden's has been the go-to spot for great burgers since 1939.

Did You Know: In 2002, Owasso became a "City of Character," solidifying its commitment to promoting strong character values in throughout the community.

2. BARTLESVILLE

- Odds of Being a Victim of a Violent Crime: 1 in 366.9
- Commute Time: 15.7 minutes
- Income: \$48,036
- Residents With a Bachelor's Degree or Higher: 29.8%
- Restaurants: 1 per 394 inhabitants

Bartlesville is tucked away in the northeast corner of Oklahoma, adjacent to the Osage Indian Reservation. The discovery of oil at the turn of the 20th century kick-started the city's transformation from small trading post to bustling urban center. ConocoPhillips and Phillips 66 combine to employ the largest number of Bartlesville's residents. Reasonably priced homes, a relatively low incidence of violent crime and a short average commute all contribute to the city's high ranking on our list.

Did You Know: The Woolaroc Museum and Wildlife Preserve in Bartlesville is the only place where you can observe Western and Native American artifacts alongside roaming herds of bison, elk and longhorn cattle.

1. EDMOND

- Odds of Being a Victim of a Violent Crime: 1 in 982
- Commute Time: 20.8 minutes
- Income: \$71,216
- Residents With a Bachelor's Degree or Higher: 50.7%
- Restaurants: 1 per 491 inhabitants

Part of the Oklahoma City metro area, Edmond takes its motto, "A Great Place to Grow," very seriously. According to a May 2014 article from the Washington Post, Edmond is Oklahoma's fastest-growing large city. Its highly educated population enjoys the best violent crime rate of any community in the state, as well as one of the highest median incomes. Oklahoma Christian University and the University of Central Oklahoma attract thousands of students each year while also providing a sizeable number of jobs. There's no shortage of great places to grab a bite, including local favorites Boulevard Steakhouse and the Cow Calf-Hay.

Did You Know: Edmond is home to St. John the Baptist Catholic Church, the first church building established in the Oklahoma territory.

To be sure, Oklahoma City and Tulsa can't be beat when it comes to the variety of restaurants, shopping and job opportunities they have to offer. Although most of the cities in our study don't approach them in size, they surpass them in terms of safety, better pay and overall livability. If you're looking for a well-rounded place to call home, you won't be disappointed with any these 10 cities.

Data Sources:

- U.S. Census Bureau, Population Estimates
- FBI, Uniform Crime Reports
- U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey
- U.S. Census Bureau, Economic Census

THE TOP 10 CITIES TO LIVE IN OKLAHOMA

Rank	City	Violent Crime Odds	Average Commute Time	Median Household Income	% Bachelor's Degree or Higher	People per Restaurants and Bars
1	Edmond	1 in 982.0	20.8	\$71,216	50.7%	490.7
2	Bartlesville	1 in 366.9	15.7	\$48,036	29.8%	394.0
3	Owasso	1 in 536.4	20.5	\$66,074	29.6%	419.4
4	Broken Arrow	1 in 649.6	20.3	\$64,411	31.3%	718.4
5	Yukon	1 in 716.2	20.9	\$61,766	28.0%	492.4
6	Norman	1 in 658.8	20.9	\$48,248	43.4%	462.2
7	Enid	1 in 303.4	14.7	\$41,515	20.9%	514.0
8	Moore	1 in 735.9	21.6	\$56,892	22.3%	741.2
9	Lawton	1 in 107.4	14.5	\$43,953	19.7%	603.5
10	Ponca City	1 in 218.3	14.9	\$40,434	20.4%	430.6

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